CLAIMS

1. A device (10) for storing personal profiles and for controlling the access, from a plurality of remote entities (16, 18, 20) within a telecommunication network supporting a plurality of services, to databases storing said personal profiles, characterised in that said device (10) comprises a first plurality of databases (44, 46, 48) and interfaces (24, 26) for managing and centrally controlling the access, from any of said remote entities (16, 18, 20), to said first plurality of databases (44, 46, 48) and to a second plurality of databases (50), said interfaces (24, 26) comprising:

- a plurality of adapters (26) toward said first (44, 46, 48) and second (50) plurality of databases, each adapter being able to manage a corresponding typology of database;
- a plurality of application interfaces (28) toward said plurality of remote entities (16, 18, 20) able to manage different mechanisms for accessing databases;
- an authentication unit (52), for identification of said remote entities;
- an authorization unit (37) for authorizing said remote entities (16, 18, 20) to use said adapters (26), by means of the verification of essential requirements and the management of a corresponding authorization to use;
- an accounting unit (36) for tracking the accesses to said first (44, 46, 48) and second (50) plurality of databases.

2. A device according to claim 1, wherein said accounting unit (36) tracks the accesses to said first (44, 46, 48) and second (50) plurality of databases by means of the registration, for each access, of information related to the identity of the remote entity that made the access, to the access times and to the data exchanged during access.

3. A device according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of services comprises Voice over IP or multimedia or internet services.

4. A device according to claim 1, wherein said adapters (26) allow the access to said first and second plurality of databases independently from the particular technology of the database.

5. A device according to claim 1, wherein the access to said application interfaces (28) depends on a plurality of authorizations contained in an XML descriptor.

6. A device according to claim 1, wherein said interfaces (24, 26) allow the access to said first (44, 46, 48) and second (50) plurality of databases by means of trusted application interfaces (30), in case the access is requested by authorized applications, and by means of untrusted application interfaces (32), in case the access is requested by unknown applications.

7. A device according to claim 6, wherein said interfaces (24, 26) allow the access to said first (44, 46, 48) and second (50) plurality of databases in a read mode.

8. A device according to claim 6, wherein said interfaces (24, 26) allow the access to said first (44, 46, 48) and second (50) plurality of databases in a write mode for entering new information.

9. A device according to claim 6, wherein said interfaces (24, 26) allow the access to said first (44, 46, 48) and second (50) plurality of databases in a write mode for modifying existing information.

10. A device according to claim 6, wherein said interfaces (24, 26) allow the access to said first (44, 46, 48) and second (50) plurality of databases in a search mode.

11. A device according to claim 1, wherein said first plurality of databases (44, 46, 48) contain information characterising a user in terms of user profile.

12. A device according to claim 11, wherein said user profile comprises identity, personal data, preferences, subscribed services and used terminals.

13. A device according to claim 1, wherein said first plurality of databases (44, 46, 48) contain information characterising a service in terms of service profile.

14. A device according to claim 13, wherein said service profile comprises information characterising the configuration of services for different users.

15. A device according to claim 1, wherein said first plurality of databases (44, 46, 48) contain information characterising the terminals used in said multimedia and/or telecommunication service network.

16. A device according to claim 15, wherein said information characterising the terminals are stored into a generic terminal profile database, containing information relative to static characteristics of terminals, and into a network terminal profile database, containing information relative to dynamic characteristics of terminals.

17. A telecommunication network comprising a device for storing personal profiles and for controlling the access, from a plurality of remote entities, to databases storing said personal profiles, characterized in that said device (10) is realized according to any of claims 1 to 16.

18. A method of providing the access to databases for storing personal profiles, to a plurality of remote entities (16, 18, 20) within a telecommunication network supporting Voice over IP and/or multimedia and/or internet services, and for controlling said access, characterised in that it comprises the following steps:

- receiving an access request from any of said remote entities (16, 18, 20);
- authenticating said remote entity by means of the identification of the remote entity requesting the access;
- providing a logically centralized access to said databases for storing personal profiles by means of a plurality of application interfaces (28) suitable for managing different mechanisms for accessing databases and by means of a plurality of adapters (26) toward said databases, each adapter being able to manage a corresponding typology of database;
- tracking said access by means of the registration of information related to the identity of the remote entity that effected the access.

19. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein said step of tracking said access comprises collecting information about the access time and the data exchanged during access.

20. A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein said step of authenticating said remote entity comprises authorizing said remote entity by means of the verification of essential requirements and the management of a corresponding authorization to use.

21. A computer program comprising computer program code means adapted to perform all the steps of any of claims 17 to 19 when said program is run on a computer.

22. A computer program as claimed in claim 21 embodied on a computer readable medium.